

**Opening Statement**  
**Senator Charles E. Grassley**  
**June 17, 1999**

Good Afternoon. I call this hearing to order.

Someone once said it is easy to meet expenses, everywhere I go there they are. In a society where so much is available to purchase it is difficult to focus on saving for retirement, especially when retirement can seem so far away. It is vital that we encourage our Nation's workforce to build a strong foundation of retirement savings that will see them through their golden years.

The lack of understanding regarding the sources of income in retirement prompted me to introduce the SAVER Act in the last Congress. SAVER maps out three areas where we need to focus our energies in helping Americans achieve a secure retirement: First, motivating individuals to take steps to secure their own retirements. Second, assisting small employers to understand the pension coverage options available and build consensus on government-created barriers which discourage employers from offering a pension benefit. Finally, for those individuals who are especially at risk -- women, minorities and those who simply cannot afford to save -- SAVER provides an avenue for the government and private sector to collaborate to prepare workers for retirement.

One year ago this month, the first of three SAVER Summits was held here in Washington, D.C. Delegates from across the political spectrum in the public and private sector collaborated on ideas to help workers prepare for retirement and increase the national savings rate. Today's hearing has dual purposes: to be a follow-up event to the SAVER Summit and to highlight initiatives in the public and private sector which educate people about the need to build a retirement nest egg as well as encourage people to set financial goals and achieve them.

The philosophy behind the SAVER ACT is that in order to tackle the problem of America's low savings rate we need the coordinated efforts of the government, corporations, organizations and individuals. The witnesses before the Committee today will discuss efforts in each of these arenas.

Our first witness, Senator Bob Graham of Florida, was a delegate to the SAVER Summit and is also a sponsor of comprehensive pension reform legislation aimed at helping small employers provide pensions to their employees, educating employees about the need to save and assisting workers in building a retirement nest egg.

Our second panel consists of five witnesses who will showcase successful initiatives coordinated by the government, companies and organizations which are educating workers about setting financial goals and saving for retirement.

Finally, on our third panel we will hear from Dallas Salisbury of the Employee Benefit Research Institute. While there are a lot of successful initiatives out there, we need to keep in mind that savings rates and pension coverage rates still are not where they should be. Mr. Salisbury will discuss the findings of the Small Employers Retirement Survey and the Retirement Confidence Survey. The findings of the Small Employers Retirement Survey hopefully will shed some light on what small employers view as barriers to offering a pension plan. I am eager to hear from all of our witnesses, but first we will hear opening statements from the other members of the Committee.